

# The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, August 31. 1695.

Quest. 1. **I** Beg the favour of your Charitable Advice: I am a Young Man, am lately set up, have but a small stock, few friends, and but little Trading, yet I find great Inclinations to marry, tho at the same time I don't well know how to maintain a Wife. I am continually perplexed with unruly desires, by which I am afraid I sin against God, tho I do what I can to divert these thoughts; I find them still very powerful and doubt in time I may be tempted to go beyond, altho I thank God I have hitherto preserved my self from any unlawful act of that kind. *What must I do in this case?*

Ans. We may give you a great deal of good advice, and bid you avoid temptations, fast and pray, &c. But that has not always been found powerful enough to cast out this Devil, where it is so, 'tis very happy since it prevents many inconveniencies which persons bring upon themselves, by precipitate Marriages: And if you can find that means sufficient 'twill be much the best, if not you must marry with all convenient haste; perhaps, you may get a wife that can add so much to your stock, as may put you in a better way of living, but if you can't do that, you must get one will help by her own industry, or at least be content with your circumstances whatever they be,

We have several querists under the same unhappy circumstances, whom we refer to this answer.

Quest. 2. *I am a young man, and take a great delight in reading, but the badness of my memory takes off a great part of my pleasure, Which otherwise, I think would accrue to me from it, whereby I am almost discouraged from the prosecution of my delight, and which is the more augmented by my meeting with some of my acquaintance, who having many times read the same thing as I have done and perhaps not so lately neither; yet they can repeat many Passages with great fluency: Now Gentlemen, my Memory I'm sensible you nor my self can't make better, but what I desire of you is, to give me some short rules which may be for my government in reading, and perhaps may something help my memory.*

Ans. Endeavour to understand well what you read, and read the same things very often; don't meddle with any thing of a distinct subject before you have well digested one, and use your self to repeat and talk much of what you read, and this method if any thing can, will be very helpful to you.

Quest. 3. *If I receive an injury from any man, upon his repentance and submission, I acknowledge my self by the Law of God obliged to forgive him. But then as to the performance of this Duty of Forgiveness, I find in my self these doubts. Whether the forgiving of an injury, does in a Scripture sense imply an absolute forgetting it. And if I do forgive, am I by any express or positive Law in the Gospel obliged so far to forget, as never to mention the injury any more? Supposing it to be such, as may very probably by the same offender be offered to other People, or at least if I have just suspicions from my knowledge of the man, to imagin that the like may be again offered. Whether, I say, I am not then rather obliged to mention the injury (tho I do forgive him) (and to use the Scripture Phrase) to note that man, that others by my example may avoid his Conversation.*

Ans. We are not required wholly to forget it, since that can't be done without the destroying of our faculties, and may absolutely be said not to be in our power, but the injury must never be remembered with any Malice or Regret; Consequently never to mention it to the prejudice of the offending party, or where it may have any ill effects. Yet, if the guilty person be such an one, as would only want an opportunity to injure any man, it alters the case, and we ought

for the good of others, but not out of private revenge, to discover what he is.

Quest. 4. *I know some persons have believed, that by the parable of Lazarus and the wicked Rich Man, our Saviour designed to represent himself and the Jews, but I don't see which way the comparison can hold, and desire you if you have read what has been said upon it, that you would give us some short account on't.*

Ans. Some learned Men indeed have thought that by this parable, our blessed Lord intended to signify something of his own State upon Earth, and that of the Jews at that time, and we'll leave every one to Judge with how much probability. They say that *Dives* represented the Jews, and particularly the Proud, Ambitious, and Covetous Pharisees; *Lazarus*, Jesus Christ; tho the whole design of the parable was to reproach the Jews with the contempt they shew'd to *Moses*, the Prophets, and their doctrine, by making the main business of their salvation to consist in ceremonies, an external and pompous worship, whilst they rejected the *Messiah*, because he appeared under the form of a poor Man like *Lazarus*. Which opinion they endeavour to confirm, by the whole sequel of the discourse, and by the Etymology of the word *Lazarus*, which they derive from the Hebrew word, *אֵלֶּזָר* *Elezar* which may be understood *God my help*. The crumbs which fell from the rich mans table, were the poor and despicable amongst the Jews, whose salvation was passionately wished by the Saviour of the World: And the Dogs which licked the wounds of *Lazarus*, were the Gentiles who embraced the Gospel. *Lazarus* and the rich man dyed, *Jerusalem* was taken and sackt. They say no mention is made of the *Sepulchre* of *Lazarus*, because the death of Jesus Christ was so far from injuring his doctrine, that it was a means to spread it through the whole world. But that it is expressly said that the rich man was buried, which answers to the utter destruction of the republick of the Jews, since which time that Nation has always been strangers and vagabonds, always unhappy and persecuted: They hoped to have lifted up their heads under the empire of *Adrian*, but instead of lessening their afflictions they did but encrease them. And they say the reason why *Abraham* sent the Jews to *Moses* and the Prophets, was because 'twas chiefly after the time of *Adrian* that they were so prejudiced in favour of traditions, having about that time composed the *Talmud*, that they equall'd, nay, even preferred them to the holy Scripture.

Quest. 5. *In the Ebionites Gospel, which is called the Gospel according to the Hebrews, why are those verses in the 19 of St. Mat. concerning the young man changed after this manner; A rich man said unto him, Master, what good thing must I do to gain life? Jesus answered him, Man, obey the Law and the Prophets, he replied I have done it, Jesus said unto him go and sell all which thou hast, divide it amongst the poor, and after that come and follow me. Upon which the rich man began to shake his head, not thinking the advice good; Jesus said unto him again how sayst thou I have fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, since it is written in the Law, thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, and there is many of thy brethren the Children of Abraham, who are but ill clothed, and ready to dye with hunger, whilst thy house is full of good, and thou doest nothing towards the relieving of them. Then turning himself towards Simon his Disciple who was sitting near him, Simon Son of Johannes, says he, it is more easy for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Ans. The reason why *Ebion* made this change in these verses, making our Saviour merely a commentator upon the Law, was because he did not believe Jesus Christ



Christ to be either the Son of God or a Lawgiver, but only a simple interpreter of Moses.

*Quest. 6. If a Minister of the Gospel be a Minister who preaches good and sound doctrine, altho his life be not over pious, as a Minister who lives well, and preaches so indifferently that little is to be learnt from him.*

*Ans.* Yes, since we are only to examine the reasonableness of what he delivers, and not how far it influences himself.

*Quest. 7. How may a true Lover be known from a false?*

*Ans.* A man who loves sincerely, will not only be careful not to omit any thing which can be of any real service to his mistress, but he'll also be very assiduous to do every thing which he thinks can please her; and tho the false one may endeavour to counterfeit as much, yet it being merely artifice, and not a pure effect of love, if he's tried for some time, 'tis impossible but that a curious eye should at some moments perceive less ardour.

*Quest. 8. Your speedy answer is desired by me, who am a widow of no fixt place of abode, who have been beloved by an ingenious man for some years last past, but he now is married to a good discreet woman, but she is old, and therefore he can't love her, but still Really loves me, to that degree that he is almost Lunatick; and so disturbed in mind that I am afraid my unkindness to him in not marrying him whilst single will break his heart, for he is already rendered by me incapable of any business whatsoever. I am satisfied he really Loves me as he Loves his Life, and would hazard it to the utmost if he could by any means thereby be out any thing serviceable to me; he has such a tender Love for me, he values not what time he spends in serving me, and therein thinks himself happy, which appears plainly to me by what he has already lately done. If I had had him, our age quality and fortune agreeing, we might have been both happy in the enjoyment of each other; but now he is ruined by my ingratitude, for when he was most Loving, I was most out of humour, for which upon serious consideration since, I am heartily sorry, he being unhappy through my means, and that I should be the cause of his misfortunes. Therefore with all speed, pray let me beg your Directions what course I must take to make him satisfaction to each particular injury, if not possible for all, to as many as I can, and you will oblige me.*

*Ans.* You having only in general said, you have injured him by ungratefully marrying another, we can only return you a general answer; you must do all that lies in your power to render him happy, for which there is but one way, and that is by doing his duty; you ought indeed to beg his pardon having offended him in the highest nature you could, except you had taken away his life, after which if you cannot by urging his obligations of love and tenderness to his wife, (whose age ought to have been considered before marriage, and can be no excuse to him now) prevail on him to divert and conquer all the irregularity of his love for you, the most probable way must be taken to effect it, which is by removing your habitation so far from him that he may neither ever hear from you, or know where you are; this determination you should acquaint him with, lest by his having any hopes of seeing you again, his passion should be continued, and the object being thus removed 'tis impossible but that in time he may be able to recover his liberty.

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